

# VA Voluntary Service

## N E W S L E T T E R

for the volunteers of the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York

Spring 2001 • Volume 1, Issue 1

## Area Volunteers Nationally Recognized

The Department of Veterans Affairs is publishing a book entitled "Faces of a Grateful Nation - A Celebration of VA Volunteers". This book pays tribute to the VAs most committed and caring volunteers.

Nominations were accepted from across the United States. Thirty-nine volunteers were selected including four from our own area.

### **Roland "Bud" Abare, Stratton VA Medical Center**

Vietnam veteran, Roland "Bud" Abare began volunteering at the Stratton VA Medical Center in 1996. As a volunteer, Bud utilizes his experience as an LPN, helping nurses triage patients.

Bud also participates in patient recreation and music therapy activities - often providing musical entertainment by his seven-piece jazz band. He has also volunteered at the Golden Age Games and sponsors luncheons as well as joint activities with other veterans' organizations.

Bud has dedicated his life to lifting up his fellow veterans.



### **Helen Gladwin, Canandaigua VA Medical Center**

Helen began volunteering at the Canandaigua VA in 1951. At 98 years old, she has truly made an impact on the lives of the veterans she has served. Her remarkable 90,116 hours of voluntary service remains an inspiration to all who know her and work by her side.



Helen is a companion therapist. Despite her fixed income, Helen mails hundreds of birthday and holiday greeting cards to veterans, personalizing each with her poetry.

A serious injury has caused Helen to modify her vigorous activities - now she can only contribute about 8 hours/day, 2 days/week. Still, a dedicated commitment for a volunteer of any age!

### **George & Margaret Mulhair and Bill & Doreen Crane, Bath VA Medical Center**

This two-couple, husband and wife team developed (and now maintain) the Jump Start Program. Created to help low income and indigent veterans being discharged get a "jump start" on life, this program has made a difference to everyone it has touched. Jump Start provides veterans with the essentials to set up a household.

These volunteers came on board when the program was just a room full



*The Mulhairs and the Cranes organize items in the Jump Start supply room.*

of stuff. They catalogued and organized all of the items and took charge of a dream and made it a reality. They continue to maintain Jump Start and solicit donations for area organizations and individuals.



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Karen Haas (518) 462-3311 ext. 2370

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### Canandaigua

Robin Johnson (716) 393-7759

### Syracuse

Robert Hawes (315) 476-7461 ext. 2617

### Western New York (Buffalo & Batavia)

Mark Francis (716) 862-8667

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Printed by students in the Pre-Vocational Apprenticeship Program, Graphic Arts, Bath



The VAVS newsletter has been created for all volunteers and potential volunteers of VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York. This publication is meant to showcase the wonderful work all of our volunteers contribute to VA. Please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the Advisory or Editorial Boards with your comments, corrections or suggestions.



**Visit Our Network Web Site**

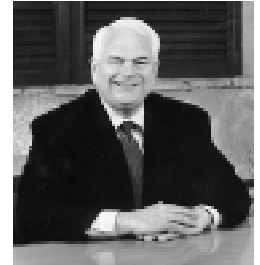
<http://www.va.gov/visns/visn02/>

## Dear volunteer,

Every day you assist the VA health care team help sick veterans get well again - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Without you there would be a void, a missing link in our ability to provide the holistic approach to medicine we are so proud of. Your caring can be seen and felt by our veterans and staff. The numerous activities you and your organization provide our medical centers and at national VA events are invaluable.

As we continue to grow into our surrounding communities and open new outpatient clinics, we create the need for even more volunteers. Health care changes constantly. There are new treatments, new medications, and new research, all changing the way we

provide health care. I am confident that together we will seize these new opportunities and meet these new challenges.



I am very proud of you and all the work you do for the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York.

Thank you,

Mr. Malphurs  
Network Director

## 2001 - Year of the Volunteer

The United Nations has declared 2001 as the **International Year of the Volunteer**. This proclamation includes over 100 countries and hundreds of organizations worldwide. Visit the website at [www.iyv2001.org](http://www.iyv2001.org) for more information.

In 1998, an estimated 109 million adults aged 18 and older volunteered - donating 19.9 billion hours of their time. Volunteers averaged 3.5 hours of their time per week. If these volunteers were paid \$14.30/hour, their wages would total over \$225 billion.

**Did you know:**

- women volunteer more than men,

- men often volunteer more of their time at their volunteer assignment,
- seniors are volunteering in greater numbers,
- senior volunteers (over the age of 75) have increased by 43%
- The number of minority volunteers continues to grow each year?

Are we living longer and healthier lives or does volunteering lead to longer and healthier lives?

We not only salute the "traditional" VAVS volunteers that visit our facilities and assist our staff on a daily basis but the employees and VA retirees who have taken on voluntary service roles, as well.



## Volunteer Opportunities for Students

Student volunteers are an important part of any VA medical centers' treatment team. VAVS defines student volunteers as anyone under the age of 19. These volunteers receive valuable experience and training which can help them when it comes time to apply for college or a job.

The VA voluntary service program offers students excellent opportunities for:

- Exploring health care career options
- Gaining experience in a health care environment
- Learning new skills
- Making new friends
- Eligibility for a college scholarship



*Area college student, Jennifer Santos volunteered her time at an enrollment event.*

The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award provides scholarships to students who volunteer at VA medical centers. All college-bound volunteers are eligible. Contact your local VA health care Voluntary Service staff for nomination criteria.

There are many opportunities to explore in the Student Volunteer Program. Here are just a few of the services and specialties available to student volunteers:

- Audiology and Speech Pathology
- Outpatient/Ambulatory Care Activities
- Extended Care
- Occupational Therapy
- Laboratory Medicine
- Patient Escort
- Medical Administration
- Pharmacy
- Medical Illustration
- Physical Therapy
- Nursing
- Research
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Social Work

A wide variety of assignments are available. Volunteers are selected according to the needs of the medical center, assignment preference and skills. Training and orientation is also provided.

## Guest Authors Needed

We are looking for guest authors to write articles that will inspire, motivate, add humor or change our lives. Anyone interested in being a guest author should contact his or her local VAVS representative or Heather Schrader at (716) 241-2050.



*One person can  
make a difference  
-and every person  
must try.*

John F. Kennedy

## FREE Computer and Internet Training Classes Available

VA Healthcare  
Network Upstate /

New York is offering free computer and internet training for interested



volunteers. Presented by our Information Systems staff, volunteers can learn about:

- Computer basics: getting the PC ready, logging on, using the mouse and keyboard, window navigation, logging off, and shutting down.
- Internet basics: looking at the internet, exploring the world wide web, using browser software, information security issues, navigating the Network 2 website, and performing searches.

Volunteers interested in taking the Internet Basics class must successfully pass a basic computer literacy quiz or complete the Computer Basics course.

Contact your local Voluntary  
Service department to registration.



## Hospitalized Veterans Saluted

Each year around Valentines Day, there is a salute to hospitalized veterans at VA Medical Centers across the United States.

During the week of February 11, valentines were given to veterans. Fraternal and service organizations, as well as area school children visited hospitalized veterans to help distribute the valentines.

Here are just a few of the ways National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans was celebrated around our Network:

### ♥ Albany VA Medical Center

- Postal Service employees brought in "We Salute Veterans" posters filled with signatures from postal employees.
- Sixteen officers of the US Army Nurse Corps distributed carnations and gift packets to every inpatient.
- Twenty-five students from Galway Middle School decorated the 1C Primary Care Clinic and 5B Sub-Specialty Clinic waiting rooms. They also distributed homemade cookies to the outpatients.
- The River Rats (professional hockey players) visited hospitalized veterans and gave them autographed team photos.
- Employees of Xerox sent us Valentine's Day posters.
- The Lincoln Grade School choir performed and then interviewed veterans about their military experiences.



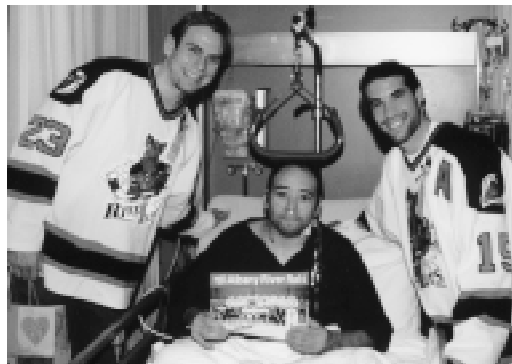
*Frank Fantanza receives a valentine from VA employee, Nancy King.*

### ♥ Canandaigua VA Medical Center

- Approximately 90 volunteers, including 80 students from three schools, participated in the traditional valentine distribution to veterans. The students distributed handmade valentines, cookies and balloons.

### ♥ VA WNY Healthcare System (Batavia & Buffalo)

- An "Open House" was held at both sites. Patients were presented with a commemorative gift, date planner and canteen books.
- Batavia - Approximately 40 community guests and leaders were accompanied throughout the facility by staff and volunteers. A reception was also held.



*Albany River Rats Chris Ferraro and Mike Rupp visit with veteran Carlos Marciano.*

- Buffalo - A formal ceremony was held for guests and dignitaries (including a former Buffalo Bill, local news anchors, radio talk show hosts, government officials, as well as local district and state service organization representatives).
- During the ceremony, students from St. Mary's School for the Deaf signed the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem.
- The DAV and Auxiliary, as well as POWs hosted a Valentine's Day dinner for all veterans at Buffalo's Partial Hospitalization Program.

### ♥ Syracuse VA Medical Center

- With the help of Better Opportunities for Single Veterans (BOSS) and Voluntary Service, 19 Fort Drum soldiers spent an afternoon with veterans - sharing their service experiences with each other.
- An ice cream social and (seated) volleyball tournament was also held for the veterans.

### ♥ Bath VA Medical Center

- Camp Fire Boys and Girls visited the Nursing Home Care Unit.
- The Chemung and Steuben County American Legion and Auxiliary joined the Chaplain to provide a commemorative ceremony to honor four chaplains who perished on the USS

(see Saluted page 5)







## Saluted (continued from page 4)

Dorchester. News reporter Jeff Murry, the grandson of Chaplain Fox (one of the deceased chaplains) joined us for the program.

- The Office of the Aging provided tax counselors to assist our domiciliary patients with tax preparation.
- The Chamber of Commerce provided a social hour with refreshments, visits and valentines.
- Each female patient received a corsage from a local flying club.
- The Women's Army Corps provided a party for all the female veteran patients.
- Thomas Mazza, the Disabled American Veteran State Commander presented an award to a local business that hires and trains veterans.
- The Red Cross sponsored a patient art show and talent show that was open to the public.



*A Camp Fire Girl presents a valentine to a former POW.*

## Volunteers - Our Most Priceless Assets

### *What is VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)?*

Founded in 1946, Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) has been providing veterans with additional programs and services at VA health care facilities throughout the United States. As the largest volunteer program of the Federal government, more than 350 national and community organizations support VAVS. Since its inception, volunteers have donated more than 482 million hours of service.

VAVS volunteers augment staff in a variety of ways including: end of life care programs, foster care, community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, and veteran outreach centers. Our volunteers are special, generous people contributing approximately

\$40 million in gifts and donations. In (fiscal year) 1999, VAVS volunteers contributed nearly 14 million hours of

service. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to America's veterans and to VA.

Through the volunteer program, men and women of all ages partner with the VA's health team. Some volunteers bring special skills and knowledge while others bring their desire to explore and learn. Volunteers work directly with our patients and others help us behind the



*Syracuse veteran, Dan Gallin enjoys a pet therapy visit from volunteers Magic and Gladys Bassett.*

scenes. Voluntary Service matches the volunteer to the assignment, as well as providing orientation and training (for volunteers) and recognizing our volunteers for their service at an annual banquet.

### *How Can You Become Involved?*

Becoming a volunteer (or becoming a more active volunteer) is now even more convenient. Simply:

- ⇒ contact the Department of Veterans Affairs *facility* nearest you. Ask for Voluntary Service. Tell the staff you are interested in becoming a VAVS volunteer. They will take care of the rest,
- ⇒ send an e-mail message to [g.volunteers@forum.va.gov](mailto:g.volunteers@forum.va.gov), which will refer your inquiry to the nearest VA facility,
- ⇒ visit our website at: [www.va.gov/visns02/vet/volunteer](http://www.va.gov/visns02/vet/volunteer)





## Important National Events

- **National Veterans Golden Age Games-** Veterans of Foreign Wars and Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. June 9-16, 2001, Duncanville, Texas.
- **National Veterans Wheelchair Games-** Paralyzed Veterans of America and/or Eastern Paralyzed Veterans of America. July 1-5, 2001, New York City, NY.
- **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival-** Help Hospitalized Veterans and American Legion Auxiliary. October 15-21, 2001, Prescott, Arizona.

Help us celebrate the triumph of the human spirit by taking part in the National Rehabilitative Events. Your participation as a volunteer or as a spectator cheering on the veteran participants is an ideal way to show your appreciation of these men and women who have served our country.

The VA Voluntary Service staff is responsible for the gifts and donations for travel and expenses of veterans and accompanying staff to the National Rehabilitation Programs. We encourage financial assistance from individuals, corporate, civic and veteran's service organizations. Please consider a donation of time and/or money for these worthy programs.

### National Veterans Golden Age Games

The National Veterans Golden Age Games are a multi-event sports and recreational competition for U.S. military veterans, age 55 or older, who

are currently receiving inpatient or outpatient care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. At VA Medical Centers, recreation therapy plays a major role in the lives of older patients.

The National Veterans Golden Age Games serve as a showcase for the preventive and therapeutic medical value that sports and recreation provide in the lives of all older Americans. The Games feature 34 events with six age categories. Events include swimming, bicycling, pentathlon, table tennis, dominoes, shuffleboard, horseshoes, eight ball, bowling, checkers, croquet, and golf.

### National Veterans Wheelchair Games

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is a sports and rehabilitation program for military service veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or certain neurological problems. Attracting more than 600 athletes, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the United States.

The event this year is in New York City and hosted by VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York and the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association. Competitive events include: swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, track and field, archery, air guns, basketball,



softball, rugby, bowling, wheelchair slalom, a wheelchair rally, 5-kilometer road race and various track and field events. Athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age, and gender.

More than 2000 volunteers will be needed to ensure a successful event. To volunteer please contact Marie Crooke at the Bronx VA Medical Center at (718) 741-4212.

### National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Help Hospitalized Veterans USA, culminates a yearlong fine arts competition open to all veterans treated at VA Medical Centers nationwide. Local competitions are held and the winners are then judged at the national level.

The Creative Arts program allows veterans to express themselves through creative endeavors of imagination and handiwork. Over 100 winners will be featured in a stage show and art exhibit. The talent of these veterans is as remarkable as their stories of courage. Music and the arts have helped them conquer many physical and emotional battles. The rehabilitative quality of this event is obvious in the emotion and passion manifested in the creative process and the in the effort put forth.

Only with volunteer efforts, through dollars and time are these rehabilitative events possible.





## Upcoming Events at your Local VA Medical Center

### Albany

#### Korean War 50th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony

June 25, 10:00 a.m. - 11 a.m., New York State Korean War Veterans Memorial, Albany

#### Capital Region Veterans Stand Down

October 13, 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Troy Armory

Services provided include: enrollment and photo ID, medical and dental screenings, veterans benefits, counseling, meals, haircuts, housing assistance, legal assistance and clothing. Volunteers needed to serve as van drivers, squad leader assistants, childcare helpers, registration assistants and much more.

#### USO Dance and Fundraising Gala

November 10, Evening  
Armory Center on Central Avenue, Albany  
Sponsored by VetCare, this gala will be a nostalgic recreation of a 1942 USO Dance Canteen - complete with swing dance competitions and a performance by the USO Show of Metropolitan New York.

### Batavia/Buffalo

#### Veterans Day (Erie County Fair)

August 12, Erie County Fairgrounds, Hamburg  
Parade, VA health care information, enrollment and identification services available.  
For more information - call (716) 649-3900.

#### Stand Down 2001

September 29, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Buffalo  
For Homeless Veterans (and veterans at risk of becoming homeless). For more information call: (716) 881-5855.

### Syracuse

#### Day of Honor

July 20, 5:30 p.m.,  
War Memorial-ONCenter Complex  
The Syracuse VA's Day of Honor; a nationwide, progressive, city-by-city observance honors the service of Minority Veterans of World War II. The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs is scheduled to attend.

#### Fourth Annual N2 Golf Tournament

August 3, 10 a.m.,  
Rogues Roost Golf Course, Bridgeport  
Format, Captain and Crew. Dinner and prizes included. Proceeds will be used toward National Rehabilitative Events. For more information - call (315) 477-4538.

#### Spaghetti Luncheon

September 13,  
Syracuse VA Medical Center, Auditorium  
Proceeds will be used for National Rehabilitative Events.

#### Bake & Craft Sale

October 18,  
Syracuse VA Medical Center, Auditorium  
Proceeds will be used for volunteer recognition.

### Canandaigua

#### Annual Volunteer Picnic/Student Awards

August 16, 5:30 p.m., Pavilion, Courtyard 1  
Our VA volunteers take pride in their volunteering. This is a perfect time to share experiences in a casual setting as well as recognize our student volunteers for their accomplishments

#### Female Veterans Day Tea

November 8, 1:30 p.m.,  
Directors Conference Room, Bldg. 1  
All female veteran inpatients, outpatients and staff at Rochester Outpatient Clinic and at the VA Medical Center are invited to attend. Female veterans are given the opportunity to enroll in the VA healthcare and to socialize with fellow veterans.

### Bath

#### Veterans Rock and Roll Extravaganza featuring songs from the 50s and 60s

June 29, Bath Fairgrounds  
Classic Car Show 6:30 p.m.  
Concert at 7:00 p.m.  
Advance tickets are \$8.00 or \$10.00 at the door. Benefits Bath veterans and Golden Age Games. Sponsored by the American Legion and VAVS organizations.

#### Motorcycle Pride Ride to VA

July 4 - Sponsored by WINK 106

#### POW/MIA Ceremony

September 21, 2:00 p.m., VA Gazebo

#### International Year of the Volunteer

October 13, 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Corning  
Celebration for Bath VA & local community volunteers.

#### Marine Corps League Birthday Party

November 9, 10:00 a.m.,  
Leisure Room Bldg. 92

#### Veterans Day Program & Youth Essay Contest with musical entertainment

November 11, 1:30 p.m.

#### American Legion Auxiliary Gift Shop

November 30 - December 3





## Volunteers (continued from page 1)

### Beatrice O'Brien, Bath VA Medical Center

Bea was a WWII Army nurse. In 1996, she wrote a story about her husband's experience with the railroad and as a WWII veteran. Following the success of her story, she decided to collect the memoirs of other veterans. She came to the VA to volunteer where we matched her with a supervisor in the Day Treatment Center.

Bea now holds her own creative writing class each Friday morning. Veterans who have never written creatively before are now expressing themselves through prose and poetry.

Many patients have benefited from the healing powers of this program. Bea is just remarkable!



## Corporate Volunteering

If your company has not experienced the rewards of a company-sponsored volunteer program, let the Department of Veterans Affairs help you get started today. Your employees have the skills and talents that VA needs in helping to carry out its mission to "serve those who have served." This can be your chance to give something back to the community while helping America's veterans.

VA Voluntary Service staff will make it easy. We will:

- tailor a program for your company,
- design volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups,
- utilize your employees' existing skills in rewarding ways,
- help your employees learn new skills.

Contact the Department of Veterans Affairs for more information on starting a company-sponsored employee volunteer program. The rewards are endless.



### *A Volunteer*

You're a special person  
Who's willing to share,  
Your time and energy  
Because you care.

We couldn't do  
The thing we do  
Without the help of  
Volunteers like you



VA Healthcare Network  
Upstate New York

